



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

## FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

May 2004

### NEW

2002  
Per Capita  
Personal  
Income -  
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## Workers return to jobs - Unemployment rates drop

The April employment picture in Northwest Wisconsin means workers return to jobs and unemployment begins to decline. Following normal trends the number of unemployed declined in nine of the ten counties in the region and unemployment rates followed. The unemployment rate for Northwest Wisconsin dropped from 8.8 percent in March to 7.0 percent in April and is down from 8.4 percent one year earlier. This followed the

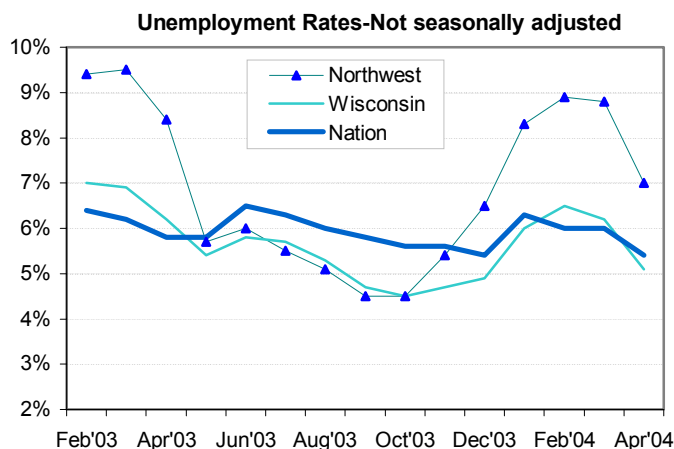
trend statewide where 70 of the 72 counties reported lower unemployment rates in April.

The State of Wisconsin unadjusted unemployment rate declined from 6.2 in March to 5.1 percent in April while the national rate dropped from 6.0 to 5.4 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state rate was 4.6 percent in April and the national rate was 5.6 percent. (County rates are not seasonally adjusted).

The highest unemployment rate in the region, and the state, was in Iron County where the rate rose from 10.9 percent in March to 12.6 percent in April. Iron County was one of only two counties in the state where the unemployment rate increased in April. The rate jumped when the number of jobless in the county increased by 50. This increase had little impact in the region where the number of unemployed declined from 8,455 in March to 6,700 in April.

The April unemployment rate in each of the ten counties was higher than the state rate and four counties were included among the ten highest in the state. They were Iron (12.6%), Bayfield (8.9%), Rusk (8.4%), and Ashland (8.4%). The April unemployment rate in Sawyer County was 6.9 percent, in Taylor - 6.8 percent, in Washburn - 6.7 percent and in Price - 6.5 percent.

The primary reason for lower rates was a reduction in the number of unemployed. In most counties this reduction was greater than the increase in employment which meant the labor force was smaller in April.



	Feb'03	Mar'03	Apr'03	Feb'04	Mar'04	Apr'04
Northwest	9.4%	9.5%	8.4%	8.9%	8.8%	7.0%
Wisconsin	7.0%	6.9%	6.2%	6.5%	6.2%	5.1%
Nation	6.4%	6.2%	5.8%	6.0%	6.0%	5.4%

### Civilian Labor Force Estimates\* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: April 2004

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03
Labor force	8,296	8,331	8,251	7,675	7,646	7,519	8,017	7,991	7,989	23,638	23,912	23,340	3,334	3,382	3,315
Employed	7,599	7,506	7,374	6,992	6,907	6,786	7,572	7,372	7,462	22,313	22,156	21,800	2,913	3,013	2,869
Unemployed	697	825	877	683	739	733	445	619	527	1,325	1,756	1,540	421	369	446
% unemployed	8.4	9.9	10.6	8.9	9.7	9.7	5.6	7.7	6.6	5.6	7.3	6.6	12.6	10.9	13.5

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03
Labor force	7,260	7,306	7,225	7,280	7,399	7,117	10,331	10,296	10,102	11,297	11,465	11,120	8,433	8,491	8,374
Employed	6,787	6,766	6,632	6,667	6,525	6,455	9,615	9,363	9,235	10,532	10,470	10,110	7,869	7,685	7,701
Unemployed	473	540	593	613	874	662	716	933	867	765	995	1,010	564	806	673
% unemployed	6.5	7.4	8.2	8.4	11.8	9.3	6.9	9.1	8.6	6.8	8.7	9.1	6.7	9.5	8.0

\* not seasonally adjusted

## Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - April 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03
Total Nonfarm	8.6	8.4	8.5	3.7	3.6	3.6	5.0	4.9	5.0	17.9	17.7	17.7	2.1	2.2	2.1
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.1	3.0	3.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.0	2.0	1.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	2.3	2.2	2.1	0.3	0.4	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2.9	2.9	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03	Apr '04	Mar '04	Apr '03
Total Nonfarm	6.5	6.5	6.4	5.8	5.7	5.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	9.1	9.0	8.9	6.1	6.0	6.1
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3
Manufacturing	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.8	3.0	2.8	0.9	0.9	1.1
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.6
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.4	1.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.5

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

In Northwest Wisconsin the labor force declined from 96,220 in March to 95,560 in April and marked the third straight year in which participation declined from March to April. In spite of the reduction the labor force is larger and with more residents working than any previous April. There were 1,750 fewer job seekers in April as nearly 1,100 found jobs but 650 stopped looking for work.

The increase of 1,100 in total employment nearly matched the increase in the number of jobs in the region (unlike national trends where gains in total employment exceed payroll increases). From March to April employers added 1,060 jobs. That is the largest increase in April in the last three years.

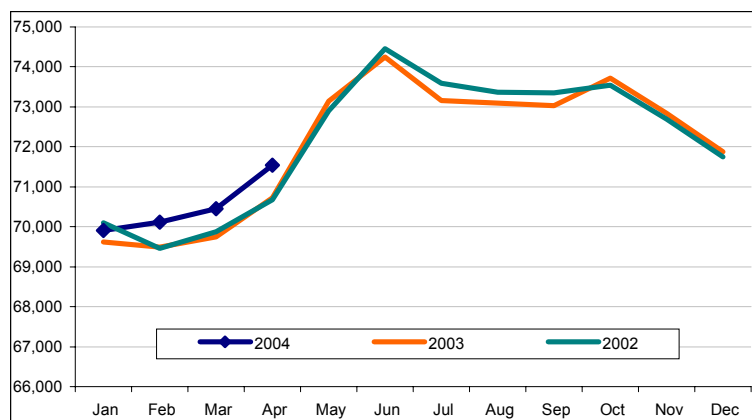
The greatest share of those jobs, 360, was with construction employers. Increases in construction occurred in nearly every county in the region. Government employment also increased in April with the addition of 325

jobs. Many of these jobs are with road maintenance, park, and forestry departments.

Trade employers added 190 jobs while leisure and hospitality employers added 160 jobs. Manufacturing employers reduced jobs again in April. Most of the job loss occurred in Taylor County.

The decline in the number of unemployed in the ten counties parallels the reduction in the number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation benefits. In mid-March, 4,784 local residents filed a claim for unemployment benefits. That dropped

Total Nonfarm Employment in Northwest



to 3,965 by mid-April and continued to decline to 2,231 by mid-May. The number of claims continues to decline in all counties in the region as workers return to jobs and not because they exhaust benefits.

Unemployment claims are lower than in the previous two years in most northwest counties and in Price they are lower than in 2000.



Find the most current Labor Market Information at: [WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI](http://WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI)

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### Per Capita Personal Income

	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn	Northwest	Wisconsin
<b>1996</b>	\$ 17,731	\$ 17,901	\$ 16,809	\$ 18,380	\$ 16,987	\$ 19,303	\$ 15,599	\$ 17,645	\$ 17,485	\$ 17,504	\$ 17,700	\$ 23,273
<b>1997</b>	\$ 18,691	\$ 18,876	\$ 18,241	\$ 19,282	\$ 18,090	\$ 20,871	\$ 16,078	\$ 18,433	\$ 18,095	\$ 18,604	\$ 18,661	\$ 24,514
<b>1998</b>	\$ 19,893	\$ 19,988	\$ 19,464	\$ 20,449	\$ 18,918	\$ 21,708	\$ 17,944	\$ 19,566	\$ 19,751	\$ 19,644	\$ 19,889	\$ 26,175
<b>1999</b>	\$ 20,373	\$ 20,416	\$ 20,100	\$ 21,358	\$ 19,597	\$ 21,650	\$ 18,629	\$ 20,730	\$ 20,277	\$ 20,231	\$ 20,532	\$ 27,135
<b>2000</b>	\$ 21,272	\$ 21,442	\$ 21,212	\$ 22,611	\$ 20,772	\$ 21,870	\$ 19,334	\$ 22,200	\$ 21,014	\$ 21,329	\$ 21,531	\$ 28,573
<b>2001</b>	\$ 22,472	\$ 22,301	\$ 22,585	\$ 22,949	\$ 22,353	\$ 23,202	\$ 20,485	\$ 23,168	\$ 21,510	\$ 22,202	\$ 22,407	\$ 29,361
<b>2002</b>	\$ 23,228	\$ 23,085	\$ 23,482	\$ 23,639	\$ 23,407	\$ 24,483	\$ 20,859	\$ 24,288	\$ 22,573	\$ 22,851	\$ 23,243	\$ 30,050
<b>Change from previous year</b>												
<b>1997</b>	5.4%	5.4%	8.5%	4.9%	6.5%	8.1%	3.1%	4.5%	3.5%	6.3%	5.4%	5.3%
<b>1998</b>	6.4%	5.9%	6.7%	6.1%	4.6%	4.0%	11.6%	6.1%	9.2%	5.6%	6.6%	6.8%
<b>1999</b>	2.4%	2.1%	3.3%	4.4%	3.6%	-0.3%	3.8%	5.9%	2.7%	3.0%	3.2%	3.7%
<b>2000</b>	4.4%	5.0%	5.5%	5.9%	6.0%	1.0%	3.8%	7.1%	3.6%	5.4%	4.9%	5.3%
<b>2001</b>	5.6%	4.0%	6.5%	1.5%	7.6%	6.1%	5.9%	4.4%	2.4%	4.1%	4.1%	2.8%
<b>2002</b>	3.4%	3.5%	4.0%	3.0%	4.7%	5.5%	1.8%	4.8%	4.9%	2.9%	3.7%	2.3%

Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, May 2004 <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis total personal income for the counties in Northwest Wisconsin increased 4.0 percent from 2001 to 2002. Total personal income in 2002 was \$4,227,898 for the combined ten county region. Over the last five-year period income increased 27 percent from \$3,336,261 in 1997.

The per capita personal income (PCPI) for Northwest Wisconsin of \$23,243 in 2002 was 77 percent of the PCPI in Wisconsin. In Price County the PCPI of \$24,483 which was 81.5 percent of Wisconsin's was the highest in the region but only 43rd highest in the state. Rusk County with a PCPI of \$20,859 was only 69 percent of the state PCPI and ranked 71st out of 72 counties.

Total personal income includes income from wages and salaries, self-employment, proprietorships, assets such as dividends, interest and rent, and transfer payments such as retirement, medical assistance, veteran's benefits, unemployment insurance and income maintenance programs.

Components of total personal income can be found at the Bureau of Economic Analysis web site:

<http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

